

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2017 05:50 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Special School District No. 1 (U351C170061)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	24
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	22
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	91

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 2: 84.351C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Special School District No. 1 (U351C170061)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. The proposed project clearly demonstrates a focus on addressing the needs of a disadvantaged student population. This population is characterized by students who are racially and ethnically diverse, as well as students with a wide range of language diversity, social class/homeless status, and limited access to technology (e19-21).
2. The proposed project addresses needs related to the lack of diversity within the district's teachers, as well as the lack of opportunity for arts educators to obtain coordinated professional development within a web-based environment (e24).

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted.
2. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

1. The proposed project extends work initiated in two previous DOE-funded projects, Mirrors and Windows, and FACETS (e25). Results from these projects included statistically significant gains in knowledge and practice in the areas of pedagogy, technology, and assessment, culturally competent instruction and culturally inclusive arts instruction (e26).
2. The anticipated outcomes are reasonable and clearly linked to the needs articulated in the project narrative (e33). The track record of arts-based funded professional development projects that have yielded positive results and the ongoing collaborative relationship between the district and the University of Minnesota contribute to the likely impact of the proposed services (e26-27). The components of the proposed project are clearly articulated and linked to project activities in each year (e26-27).
3. The inclusion of needs assessment in the first year, two days of professional development during the second year, and nearly 200 hours of blended online and face-to-face professional development in the second and third years (e30-31) indicates that the professional development will be of a sufficient intensity and duration. The professional development approach is further strengthened by rigorous online professional development, as seen in examples like the Next Generation Science Exemplar System (e28). Teachers will be provided with between 318-390 hours of professional development (e33).

Weaknesses:

The proposed project would be further strengthened by a proactive plan to ensure that teachers are able to balance involvement in the professional development with their day-to-day responsibilities. Discussion of plans for providing for substitutes that could be placed in the same schools over the course of the project would strengthen the plan (e29-31).

Reader's Score: **24**

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

1. No strengths noted.
2. The project partners have extensive experience in the areas to be addressed in the proposed project (e35). Similarly, the independent evaluator also has significant experience in the areas to be addressed by the project and has cultivated a long-term relationship with the district (e36-37). The lead evaluator has over 20 years of experience in program evaluation.

Weaknesses:

1. The project director does not appear to have extensive professional experience at the district level, with only two years in the role thus far (e34). A project manager has not been hired, and the proposed qualifications are not sufficiently detailed (e34).
2. More information is needed about the structure and collaborative work of the Design Team (e40).

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.
- (2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

1. The establishment of yearly priorities, roles, and timelines on an ongoing basis is a flexible approach to implementing the proposed project and maintaining fidelity of implementation (e40-41).
2. Given the prominent role of the web-based network and online components of the management plan, meetings of the Design Team on a weekly basis in each year of the project is an appropriate approach to demonstrating that feedback and continuous improvement are built into initial stages of the proposed project (e39). Further, the inclusion of formative and summative evaluation activities in the management plan provides evidence that this data will be used for continuous improvement (see e41, for example).
3. No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

1. The Design Team meetings do not appear to be held at an appropriate frequency at the beginning of the project, given the flexibility within the priorities, roles and timelines. (e40-41). Additionally, project milestones needed greater specificity.
2. Feedback from participants, especially formative feedback, would be a useful source of data to strengthen the management plan.
3. Though responsibilities of the project director and other personnel are discussed, the time commitments of project director and personnel are not clearly articulated (e40-42).

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

1. The incorporation of the National Core Media Standards is ambitious and innovative (e31).
2. No strengths noted.
3. The proposal is supported by strong theory (see appendix, e52). Input and activities are clearly linked to the objectives and outcomes of the project. Outcomes, though broad and aspirational, are directly connected to objectives (i. e., changes in actions or behaviors) that will allow the project leaders to assess whether overarching outcomes are being met.

Weaknesses:

1. Inclusion of intermediate measures for each outcome, beyond the beginning and ending surveys, would strengthen the evaluation plan (e45). Clear benchmarks, or possible benchmarks in regard to growth in teachers or students are not provided. This could be addressed, for example, by a rubric-based curriculum audit of the inclusion a range of cultures and individuals at the beginning of the project, as compared to the end.
2. Teachers' perceptions of the degree to which students see themselves represented in the curriculum is an indirect measure, and is also inconsistent with the overall framework of the proposed project (e46). The evaluation plan could be improved by the inclusion of measures given to students and/or parents of students.
3. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 22

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology****1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:**

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students' and educators' access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

- a. Given the relative newness of the K-8 National Core Media Standards, the inclusion of these standards as an area in which teachers can receive professional development is innovative (e31).
- b. The proposed project integrates a consideration of the K-8 National Core Media Standards in the needs assessment process. This process will form the basis of web-based network of tools and resources (e29).

Weaknesses:

- a. No weaknesses noted.
- b. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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Technical Review

Applicant: Special School District No. 1 (U351C170061)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	23
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	15
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	24
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 2: 84.351C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Special School District No. 1 (U351C170061)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. The applicant clearly describes the proposed project as focused on serving the needs of disadvantaged individuals. The demographics of the community are adequately articulated demonstrating needs. In response, the applicant has designed a program encompassing a unique, blended model of professional development for all arts educators. The program provides access to high quality learning, and support builds capacity enabling staff to serve the academic and social-emotional needs of students, specifically disadvantaged youth. The program engages 16 Arts Specialists, 4 Arts Coordinators and five of the lowest performing schools in the district. The demographics and needs of the five schools selected are copiously detailed. For example, the Sullivan Communication Center serves 657 students, 95% of whom are of color, 92% receive Free and Reduced Lunch, and 5% are homeless. The school is identified as the City's highest percent of Somali students, 62% English Language Learners, and 17% enrollment of students with disabilities. Each of the other four schools to be served demonstrates a wide scope of similar needs. Pages e18-20

The barriers to learning are clearly delineated. These include living in urban poverty and exposure to trauma. The needs are exacerbated with a growing digital divide and the lack of a culturally diverse, qualified teacher pool to effectively serve the racial and cultural composite of the students in the schools. Pages e20-21

2. The applicant precisely identifies specific gaps in services, infrastructure, and opportunities, and proposes a well-developed program to address those needs. For example, one gap is described in the area of professional learning for district arts teachers. This will be addressed in the proposed program by offering professional development sessions both in and outside of contractual time. It is asserted that last school year, not one arts specific professional development session was offered "due to competing district priorities at the schools."

A severe gap exists regarding the intensity and quality of professional development offered to arts educators. Page e22

The applicant focuses on equity in offering high quality arts instruction for every student. The applicant intends to partner with area arts organizations across the city. Five specific endeavors are encompassed in a program to address identified needs. These span: building Arts Specialist capacity in culturally responsive pedagogy; creating culturally relevant curriculum; supporting arts specialists in using the K-8 National Media Arts Standards as a vehicle for integrating technology into the classroom; and building web-based networks for Art Specialists to learn and support blended professional development opportunities. Pages e23-24

Weaknesses:

None are noted.

Reader's Score: **10**

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

1. The applicant effectively proposes a program of services which reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. The proposed program is building on the lessons learned from two previous PDAE grants initiated in 2003 and in 2007 and in continuing to increase cultural competency of arts educators in high poverty schools through professional development, peer coaching and adequate tools and knowledge to create culturally relevant arts learning environments. Pages e25-26

The three key findings of the two previous PDAE grants are described to frame the proposed program. These are serving as research based pillars. These are clearly specified as focused on: increasing the use of standards based instruction and assessment; improving comprehension of their students' understanding of art in social contexts, and strengthening educators' confidence and beliefs in their ability to help students achieve rigorous academic standards. The essential components of the program are identified as research-based and on the integration of the K-8 National Core Media Arts Standards as a vehicle for teachers to integrate technology into their arts classrooms.

2. The proposed program demonstrates a comprehensive overview and demonstrates its research-based activities and lessons learned. They provide a platform which is likely to impact the intended recipients of program services. This is evidenced in instituting three essential program components which are focused on: developing a web-based network for delivering and supporting enhanced professional development for Arts Specialists; providing culturally relevant pedagogy and practice; and integrating the K-8 National Core Media Arts Standards as a vehicle to integrate technology in arts instruction. The program is partnering with the University of Minnesota's Department of Curriculum and Instruction, in the College of Education and Human Development. This partnership and program strategies are focused to impact and support pre-service teachers and the University and strengthen the connection of University students with the district's classrooms. Pages e26-27

3. Professional development services are to be provided by the proposed project throughout each year, clearly evidencing that they are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the National K-8 Media Standards. The workshops and their content are well described and specify collaboration with community experts. Community experts are specified and include: West Metro Education Program's Cultural Collaborative Regional Professional Development Program; the Washburn Center for Children's Mental Health; and the University of Minnesota. In years two and three, participants will engage in 132 hours of face-to-face meetings with an additional 72 hours of asynchronous job embedded professional development. Pages e29-33.

In year four of the program, an additional 66 hours of face-to-face meeting time and an additional 36 hours of asynchronous job embedded professional development will be added to the program. Six outcomes are delineated for the four years of the program. These span: an understanding of arts pedagogy; an awareness of how trauma affects students learning; and knowledge and skills to increase their capacity in integrating arts standards. Pages e34-36

Weaknesses:

Adequate information is lacking to describe program services which are culturally relevant and which are supported with up-to-date research.

Reader's Score: 23

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

The applicant claims that their school district and their partnering organizations are equal opportunity employers and that they do not discriminate applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented. It is stated that both have extensive experience in recruitment strategies that focus on fair recruitment of persons from diverse backgrounds. Page e34

1. A Web Based Network Designer is to be hired in year one. In the second year, Coaches to support the deeper learning in culturally responsive pedagogy will be hired. Pages e38-39

The applicant clearly describes the qualifications of key personnel, including relevant training and experience. The applicant identifies the Project Director and describes her leadership experience and her current work with the school district. She graduated from Minnesota State University with a degree in dance and theater. In addition, the qualifications of the Project Manager are delineated, noting the position is to be hired. The Technology Integration Adviser is also identified, and his experience and training detailed. It is noted that he currently serves as a web designer and business process consultant and holds a BA from Colorado College. A key partner is noted as a lecturer in the Arts Education program at the University of Minnesota, Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Pages e35-36

2. The applicant precisely details the qualifications of two consultant firms noting their relevant training and experience. The applicant identifies the Independent Evaluator to serve in the project as the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. The person selected to serve as the lead evaluator is identified and noted having over 20 years of experience in program evaluation. In addition, the applicant will work with COMPASS to serve as a resource for identifying community artists and educators to work in the program. It is noted that COMPASS is a nonprofit educational organization that connects teacher and community artists and provided educational training in the arts. Page e37

Weaknesses:

Information is lacking to provide a job description detailing the training, experience and qualifications of the Web Based Network Designer to be hired in the program.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

1. The applicant presents some components of an adequate management plan structured to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time, including clearly defined responsibilities for accomplishing project tasks. This is evidenced in a narration of major activities in each year of the program spanning hiring, web design and initiating professional development in year two, following a planning year. Page e41

2. The applicant describes some procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. For example, it is specified that the Design Team will evaluate the format of the orientation, and that the program participants will evaluate workshops. The evaluation consultant firm is assigned to collect data for formative and summative reporting. Page e42

3. None are noted.

Weaknesses:

1. Information is lacking to identify the person responsible to ensure that project activities are accomplished within budget. While the plan identifies major program activities, clear milestones are not developed and communicated.

2. The applicant outlines very limited intentions for garnering feedback from participants and lacks any discussion of methods to be implemented to gather feedback.

3. While the applicant articulates some components of a management plan, information is lacking to identify the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel and to substantiate that the time commitment of each key staff is appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

1. The program evaluation will be conducted by the University of Minnesota's Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. They will develop methods of evaluation to include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation team will assess the degree to which the intended outcomes of the program have been achieved and produce formative and summative evaluation reports. Pages e43-44

The Minneapolis Public School Research, Evaluation and Assessment and Accountability Department will support the evaluation team from the university in providing access to data. The university management team will assess data collection and manage the district's data warehouse. This data warehouse contains all necessary achievement data and ensures sound data collection and monitoring. Page e44

A two-fold purpose for the program evaluation is articulated. They encompass measuring program implementation toward the intended outcomes in years 1-3 and providing performance feedback. Page e44

2. The applicant charts evaluation in an Outcome Evaluation design chart. The chart delineates some methods of evaluation which will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. For example, it is proposed to obtain quantitative data from the other surveys administered at the beginning and end of each year, and to gather feedback and to review lessons based on a scoring rubric. Page e45

The applicant will conduct a matched pair t-test to determine changes in their survey responses.

3. The applicant proposes a well-developed Logic Model. The theory and project goals are articulated to identify the significance of increased opportunities for high quality arts professional development to support the engagement of all learners. Societal change is specified as an outcome of the program. In addition, the program will increase Art Specialists' capacity to integrate K-8 National Core Media Arts standards and technology into the classroom. Page e52

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to identify the specific methods of evaluation which will produce quantitative data and to describe how the data will be analyzed and aligned to data-driven decision making to ensure progress.

Information linking and coordinating the district evaluation team activities with those of the university management team in data assessment and evaluation is lacking.

Reader's Score: 24

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology

1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students' and educators' access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

a. The proposed program, Arts AcceleratEd, addresses the priority well by leveraging technology. IT will use a blended model of professional development encompassing a web-based network. Open educational resources and technological solutions will support a rigorous and sustained professional development component. The Google Education Suite is identified to enable teachers to connect, learn, and collaborate with colleagues from across the district in lesson planning and strategies. This approach eliminates a barrier of cost and access to devices, although there is potentially an issue of access to high-speed Internet for some families.

b. It proposed for participating teachers to engage in professional development in working in small groups and engaging in varied opportunities and job-embedded assignments. Teachers will be required to document their learning and to share that learning in the online forums expanding the component of the Arts AcceleratEd program.

Weaknesses:

None are noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review

Applicant: Special School District No. 1 (U351C170061)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	23
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	25
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	93

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 2: 84.351C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Special School District No. 1 (U351C170061)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

(1)

The applicant describes the overall need to serve the population of five lowest performing and most diverse schools in the district, in which each school uniquely is addressing issues of poverty, homelessness and high mobility, ELLs, and Special needs. The academic struggles and barriers described (e18-20) are the challenges of living in urban poverty, and in particular, exposure to trauma. (e20-21)

The applicant draws a connection from the characteristics of the student population to teacher challenges that, without proper training, might lead to 'teacher burnout' and significant turnover (e21), leading to the conclusion that teachers need specialized training when working with students who do not have the same racial, cultural, or socioeconomic/living conditions.

Additionally the "digital divide" for students in poverty is a barrier to learning (e22), which teachers are challenged to bridge so that student learning and achievement continuously improve.

While teachers need to gain and deepen their skills related to technology and culturally relevant pedagogy, the arts educators find a gap in their Professional Development opportunities, both due to the lack of arts-specific opportunities and competing priorities that prevent them from attending what is offered without incurring additional personal cost. (e21-22)

(2)

These challenges are documented and lead to related goals to build teacher capacity to support disadvantaged students by addressing gaps in teacher access to relevant PD, teacher capacity to effectively work with students, teacher integration of technology by using media arts standards, and build a blended web-based network for PD opportunities. (e23-24)

The plan further takes into consideration the arts teachers' time constraints and the practical issue of cost for PD, using OER solutions to avoid barriers to cost, using technology for asynchronous learning, but combining online learning with in person workshops and mentor support, with a goal of teachers "deeply engaged in their work, not just demonstrating a commitment of time."

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

(1)

The project is built on success from two previous successful grants, which sought to increase the cultural competency of arts educators through PD and peer coaching, and teacher efficacy at delivering instruction, understanding their students' social contexts, and believing their ability to help students with academic standards (e26). The proposed project uses technology to refine the team's prior work, and add new content that reflects updated demographics and arts educators' challenges in accessing relevant and sustained PD (e22).

The proposed plan is carefully crafted over four years with three components directly related to current needs (e26), using a framework that takes into account comparison of impact of online and face-to-face PD, tenets of effective PD, and an exemplar blended learning model (e28).

Collaboration with the University provides up-to-date thinking and research on culturally responsive practice (e27) , and a tech consultant will bring up-to-date information to the group.

(2)

The first year will include a needs assessment and detailed planning and development. (e27-28)

The services to be provided addresses teacher needs for (1) discipline specific PD, (2) information and planning regarding culturally relevant pedagogy and practices, and (3) integration of technology into their arts classrooms, with a goal of increasing their effectiveness with a challenging target population.

The plan is well-constructed to provide teachers with relevant information on technology and cultural responsiveness, with opportunities for discussion, planning, implementation, and reflection. (e33)

The combination of services that are at once structured (scheduled workshops with release from school duties, web-based network, coaching, and additional course potential for credit) and flexible to individual needs (responsive, interactive, connected to community through the University, plus leadership potential) (e30-32) offers opportunities and enticement for teachers to continue to grow through learning, practice, collegial communication, and support.

The plan requires arts teachers to be organized and take advantage of the opportunities. This type of learning requires intense thinking and interaction. It is very strong PD.

Teacher release time from classes for nine days of workshop are provided per year.

(3)

The plan indicated number of hours beginning in Year 2 (with summer institutes, in-person workshops, online learning, and optional courses) will engage targeted teachers in a total of 318-390 hours of professional learning, plus additional support as required. (e33) (hours for each year are cited in the management plan, e39-43)

Weaknesses:

(2)

Some teachers will need support and be challenged to step up. This feature could be perceived as a weakness. (e33)

The district has ongoing initiatives, as do each of the targeted theme-based schools (e18-20). There will be PD for the arts teachers in these as well, so the plan would be well-served by giving thought to how the teachers aren't caught in competing demands on their PD time and personal time.

Nine days of release time requires writing sub plans, and leaving classes to a sub in schools where discipline can be a problem. Implications, careful thought, and strategies should be considered to avoid problems proactively.

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

(1)

The overall network of project personnel covers the needs of the project, and bring a wealth of high qualifications, training and experience to the task. (e34-39)

The Project Manager (full-time position) will be a key hire.

Some of the group has worked together before on successful projects and grants.

(2)

Project consultants and subcontractors have high qualifications, experience, and training.

Weaknesses:

(1)

The least experienced individual at the district level is the Project Director. This lack of experience may be addressed with the presence of others to guide her. (e34)

There is no indication of percentage of time each individual will spend, other than the Project Manager, who will be full time. (e34)

(2)

The proposal would be strengthened with more info about the structure and collaborative work of the design team. (e39)

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

(1)

The management plan is well laid out, with clear responsibilities for each year, and transitions from planning to implementation, with both formative and summative elements. The timeline is implied by preparations and delivery of PD, related network content, and course filings and deadlines. (e39-46)

(2)

Feedback is built in at multiple steps and at all levels. Examples: Year 1 includes a needs assessment and multiple

gatherings to determine specific teacher and site needs that will inform future work (e40). Teachers will provide feedback through surveys for workshops, in-school implementation, etc. (see evaluation plan). Summer workshops will be planned based on prior year's feedback (e41).

(3)

This is an ambitious program because it has many interrelated parts. However, there is a lot of planning time and opportunity for communication built in.

The Independent Evaluator is CAREI, which has an experienced team, and is led by Debra Ingram who is a recognized leader in arts-based research. (e37-38)

Weaknesses:

(1)

The application would be strengthened by adding a timeline chart that includes deadlines for key events. However, the program itself will drive those deadlines.

(3)

There are no specific time percentages for key personnel other than the Project Manager.

There should be an explicit plan for getting feedback from participants, including students and the community, especially because of the cultural, racial, and socioeconomic makeup of the district.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

(1)

The evaluation will measure implementation of project activities and programs to provide feedback, and measure the extent to which intended outcomes are achieved at the end of the project. (e44)

Outcomes are clearly stated, but general in nature, leading to more descriptive assessment measures. (e45-48)

Data collection is through pre/post surveys, lesson reviews, and observations. (e45-48)

Data analysis is appropriate to the type of data provided, and the nature of the outcomes. (e45-48)

(2)

Most of the evaluation information is designed to provide formative feedback to the team, so they can continually modify. (e44)

(3)

The logic model (e52) is consistent and logical, identifying the problem and inputs, defining the activities to address the problem along with specific objectives, and describing outcomes that will lead to changes in the teachers, and perhaps in society.

The evaluation plan seems appropriate for an educational setting where new strategies are being introduced and implemented, and where teachers are growing at their own rate.

Weaknesses:

(1)

Outcomes are specific about the issues addressed, but non-specific in terms of a desired amount of growth. The plan fails to identify specific methods of evaluation, such as how the data will be analyzed, disaggregated, and how it gets communicated. There could be more information about the matched pair t test. If there were more specificity of outcomes and inclusion of baseline data in each of the specific measures, then setting benchmarks would lead to stronger quantitative findings to support teacher growth. This would also address concerns about specificity of the outcomes. (e45-48)

The third intended outcome is a student measure, but it is assessed through a teacher survey about the cultural authenticity of the arts curriculum (e46). Student voices need to be collected directly from the students and community to indicate how their culture is being represented. This measure could be much stronger by including community and student voices, or observation.

Reader's Score: 25

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology****1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:**

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students' and educators' access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

(a)

The applicants plan a web-based network for teacher PD that utilizes OER, tech solutions, a forum for teacher sharing and discussion. This network will be accessible from any handheld device or computer operating system, and not bound to one platform. (e24)

(b)

The proposed courses are part of a carefully crafted, rigorous and sustained professional development effort through which teachers gain skills and knowledge that are targeted at increasing student effectiveness through culturally relevant teaching and creating their own digital classrooms using the PD structure as a model.

Of note is the innovative use of integrated learning to integrate technology using the K-8 National Core Media Arts Standards, which are fairly new (e26). While teachers are learning about how technology works and can be used in the classroom through the standards, the technology is also being used to enhance and strengthen teacher understandings and competencies in arts teaching and learning. This use of integration is different from the more usual integration of one discipline to help deliver the content or skills of another discipline.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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